

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	PERC-00	DS-00	EB-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	LAB-01	L-00	CAC-00	NSAE-00	OIC-00	NIMA-00	PA-00
	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	SGAC-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	EVR-00	R-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W	
				-----5BE6EA	100657Z	/38	

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2666  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC  
HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 001655

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S MUNCY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2015  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BC](#)  
SUBJECT: BOTSWANA CONTINUES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

REF: A. 04 GABORONE 1480  
[B](#). 04 GABORONE 1636  
[C](#). GABORONE 738

Classified By: AMBASSADOR KATHERINE H. CANAVAN FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Botswana continues to enjoy the lowest incidence of corruption in Africa as perceived by international and local observers. Nonetheless, a rash of recent allegations has fed the growing public perception that corruption is a problem in Botswana. Although the Government has taken a variety of measures to prevent and prosecute corruption, disconcerting questions have been raised about the independence of the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime. Mission continues to highlight the centrality of controlling corruption to Botswana's economic growth and political stability. END SUMMARY.

BOTSWANA STILL LEAST CORRUPT IN AFRICA

[1](#)2. (U) On October 18, Transparency International released the results of its 2005 Corruption Perception Index, which again ranked Botswana the least corrupt country in Africa and 32nd in the world. Round III of the Afrobarometer survey, shared with donors in Gaborone on October 18, showed that only 2 percent of Botswana reported having had to pay a bribe to obtain a permit or document, to avoid problems with the police, or to receive a Government service. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa release on October 12 a report entitled "Striving for Good Governance in Africa," which favorably assessed governance in Botswana, including anti-corruption efforts.

RASH OF CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS

[1](#)3. (U) Ironically, Transparency International's re-designation of Botswana as Africa's least corrupt country coincided with a rash of new corruption allegations. In early October, a group of firms sought court intervention to suspend work on several disputed government contracts -- which they claimed were irregularly awarded by the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board (PPADB) to companies owned by Member of Parliament for Ghanzi Christian De Graaf and the wife of Minister of Education, Jacob Nkate. Intervention by a "higher authority" allegedly enabled their firms to bid on tenders originally reserved for smaller companies. It then came to light that the PPADB had awarded tenders to other contractors who were initially disqualified by the contracting agency in the Ministry of Agriculture. In a third incident, reports emerged that the chief executive of the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), a lending facility established to promote citizen entrepreneurship, had abused his office to make unauthorized loans. The Chairman of CEDA's Board also reportedly owned a company that offered consultancy services for companies applying for CEDA loans, creating a clear conflict of interest.

NONE FOUND TO BE LEGITIMATE . . . YET

[1](#)4. (U) On October 4, a High Court judge dismissed the case brought by contractors suspicious that corruption had tainted a Government tender. The judge found the applicants' claim to a "legitimate expectation" to receive tenders because their companies fit the bidding

qualifications unpersuasive. Likewise, an investigation into the PPADB's 2005 tender process reportedly turned up no instances of corruption. Allegations of corrupt practices at CEDA, however, have yet to be settled.

#### CORRUPTION PERCEIVED TO BE GROWING PROBLEM

15. (U) These high profile incidents conform to an apparent increase in the perception of corruption in Botswana. Although few respondents to the Afrobarometer survey reported actually having paid a bribe, thirty percent described police officers as corrupt, up from 23 percent in Round II. In a July 2005 survey of businesspeople in Botswana funded by Mission Gaborone, Prof. Selolwane of the University of Botswana found that 74 percent of respondents perceived corruption to be increasing in Botswana, although the proportion of respondents who believed corruption to be high far exceed that of those who had knowledge of a specific instance of corruption. Members of the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM) in Francistown described the government tender process as rife with corruption to Poloff. Reflecting this growing concern, on October 10, Elias Dewah, Executive Director of BOCCIM, warned that petty corruption was becoming rampant

in Botswana.

#### GOB REMAINS VIGILANT

16. (U) The GOB remains vigilant against the danger of corruption, as witnessed by charges recently brought against suspected offenders. These range from the minor -- two police officers charged on October 13 for accepting a bribe -- to the major -- a land developer charged on October 5 with making false statements in an affidavit to fraudulently obtain a land grant. This is the first prosecution following the July 2004 conclusion of a Commission of Inquiry into irregular land allocations around the city of Gaborone (Ref A). The GOB had established a Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board in 2003 in an attempt to more transparently conduct the Government's purchases and sales. The PPADB oversees the public procurement of works, supplies, services and the disposal of public assets by all central government agencies. It is empowered to review and investigate all decisions made by the various procurement committees.

#### POLITICAL INTERFERENCE AT DCEC?

17. (C) Although the DCEC has taken appropriate steps to prevent and prosecute corruption, questions have emerged regarding the extent of its independence (Ref B). During the August 8-10 conference of regional anti-corruption agencies, for example, DCEC director Tymon Katlholo acknowledged that Batswana often believe that the DCEC focuses on petty corruption and ignores corrupt practices by the wealthy and influential. In an August 10 conversation, Philliat Matsheza, Executive Director of Harare-based Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa relayed to PolOff an earlier conversation with Katlholo. The DCEC chief had told Matsheza that Vice President Khama had personally questioned him about an investigation into the (notoriously shady) business dealings of Khama's younger twin brothers. (Note: Prof. Ken Good, the outspoken academic deported by the Government in May (Ref C), had highlighted suspicious transactions involving the Khama brothers and the Botswana Defense Force during Khama's tenure as Commander. End Note.) Another contact, attorney Dick Bayford, independently confirmed this report to Emboffs. This incident reflects a common sense of apprehension about the implications of a Khama presidency and whether he might turn a blind eye to corruption among the socio-economic elite.

#### COMMENT

18. (U) As economic growth slows and HIV/AIDS drives up dependency ratios, the temptation for government officials to seek bribes is likely to grow. The willingness of the media and the private sector to draw attention to these incidents suggests that these sectors are able to perform a watchdog function. In my initial courtesy calls with senior officials, I have stressed the importance of Botswana's maintaining its laudable performance on corruption. Mission will continue to make opportunities to support civil society efforts to keep corruption in check.

CANAVAN

NNNN